

Assistance or manipulation?

Dear Annie: I have a family dilemma. My mother is 95 years old and still living in her own home. My wife and I see her five or more times a week and help her with household chores and getting to doctors appointments. My brother and sister also help but to a lesser extent. My father passed away last February, and my mother misses him, as you might expect.

The problem is that since Dad passed away, my younger sister has involved herself quite heavily in my mother's financial matters. She got her name put on my mother's checking and savings accounts. She also got her name put on my mother's investments as a trader. These investment accounts each contain thousands of dollars.

My mother also has a will that names me, the oldest, as executor of that will. Right now it appears that I am executor of not much, as my younger sister has positioned herself as the recipient of these various accounts. This positioning took place within a few days of my father's passing.

My wife and I believe my mother was manipulated into this

situation. She was grieving and my sister took advantage. My sister explained her actions as an effort to help my mother write checks and balance her checking account, although my mother writes her own checks and balances her checking account without assistance. My mother's will states that she wants her estate to go equally to her three children after she gives her nine grandchildren \$1,000 a piece.

I don't really want to think ill of my sister, and I keep looking for the silver lining in this matter. Maybe you can make some suggestions as to what I should do, if anything. — *Concerned for Mom*

Dear Concerned for Mom: Start with Mom. The next time you're one-on-one with her, ask her open-ended questions to see how she feels about her finances. Then I would talk to your brother to see if he shares any concerns about your sister's management of her funds. If she is siphoning money from your mothers' accounts as you say she is, consider consulting an attorney about your options. It's good you're looking for the best in your sister,

but it's also wise to plan for the worst and do what you can to protect your mom from it.

Dear Annie: I have a 6-year-old son. We recently acquired 14 chicks to help take care of the tick population in our yard, and my son loves them. But our old coop is rundown and too small for all of these soon-to-be hens!

I'm a longtime reader of advice columns, and I seem to remember that years ago, a young man wrote in and asked for readers to send him a penny to help pay for college. I was wondering if my son, Tobin, could experience the far-reaching kindness of strangers to help with this problem. He loves getting the mail every day. Could folks perhaps take a moment and send a penny to a boy and his special pets? — *Cooped in Connecticut*

Dear Cooped in Connecticut: That young man was ahead of his time: He was crowdsourcing before online platforms such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe and Indiegogo existed. I'd highly recommend starting a fundraiser through one of those websites. You can get your son involved in the process in many creative ways. He could create artwork about the chickens, or write a few sentences about his hopes.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). With great charisma comes great responsibility. Be careful how you wield that today. You want friends and fans, but you don't want people to expect attention from you that you're not willing to give.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're highly motivated, but don't make yourself too busy: It will only be counterproductive. You need to be able to assimilate what you're experiencing. Dive in where it's deep enough, within limits — the pool, not the ocean.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When you don't happen to stumble on happiness, fear not. You can still create it like you're using a favorite recipe: Put in the right ingredients in the right order and you will be happy.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Though your manners are impeccable, a challenging situation puts them to the test. You'll use your quick reflexes to save someone (or yourself) from imminent embarrassment.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Getting into love is easy: You just fall. For love to continue, though, efforts must be made. You have to be willing to keep taking risks. Falling happens, mostly, in uncertain territory.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It has been said that there is no love, only acts of love. This is the perfect moment to show someone you love that you've been listening. Do the exact thing that is most needed or wanted.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll be an equalizing force in the lives of others — a safe place for someone to confide in, a neutral party in the war, the fair hand that deals the spoils. Everyone is counting on your justice... no pressure!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Fraternizing with the enemy is obviously a breach in ethics, a disloyal move, a dangerous risk — unless, in doing so, you make the enemy an ally. And just maybe the enemy was never really an enemy at all.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Perfection doesn't win hearts. Sure, people respect the hard work it takes to be masterful. However, it's that intangible something that counts much more.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It would be so much easier if life would fall into simple categories, but it never does completely. Anyway, you have too many varied interests for narrow-mindedness. Your principles are strong, but your mind is open.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You were right to put off a task until you felt compelled to take it on. But enough is enough. There's a fine line between inaction and procrastination. Get in there and get it over with.

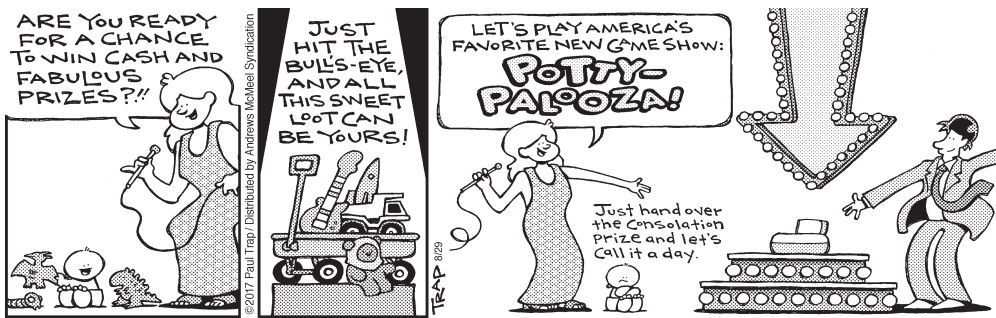
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The difference between a loan and a gift is that one should be repaid literally, while the other should be repaid in a more creative way. Of the two, the loan will be the easier one to manage.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 30). Once upon a time you gazed longingly into the wide and distant possibilities. This solar return you'll connect with them. A vibrant relationship will give you wings. There's a financial investment in November — risky and worth it. You're most decisive and persuasive at the close of the year. A healing happens in June. Libra and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 33, 38 and 12.

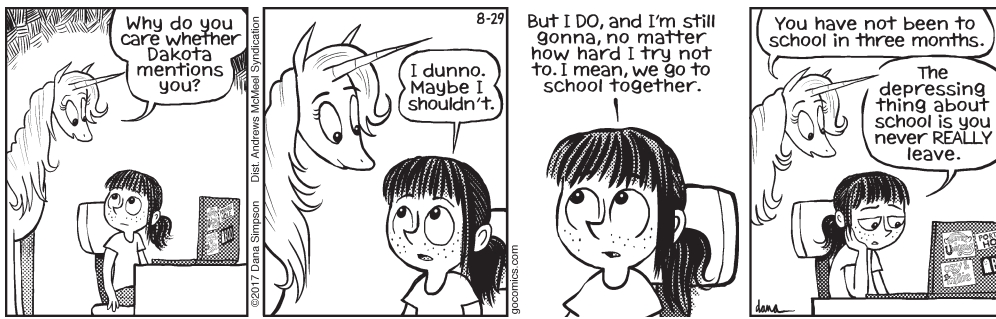
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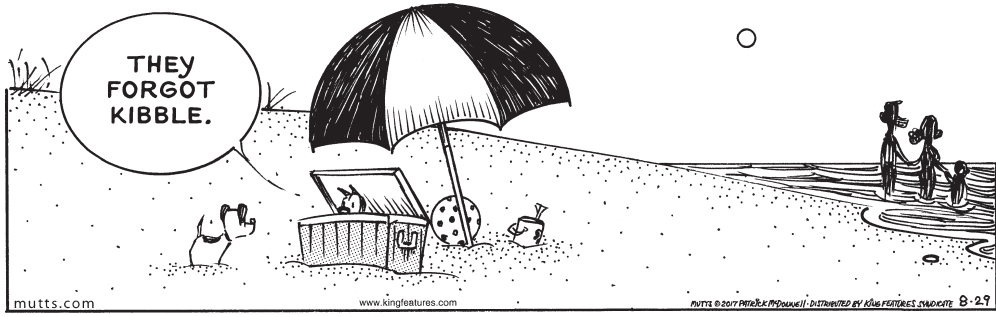
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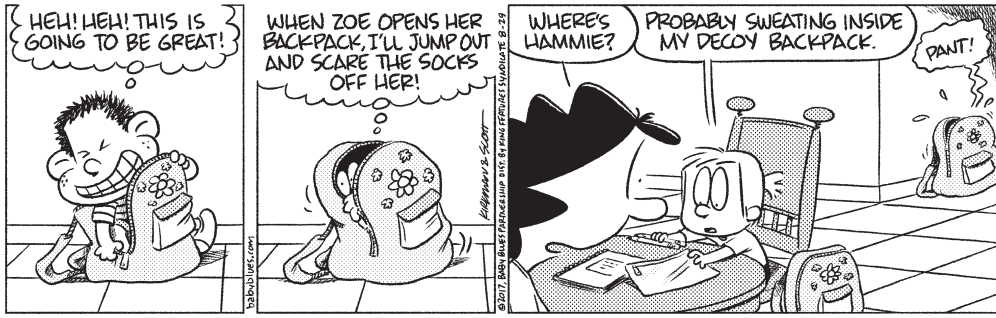
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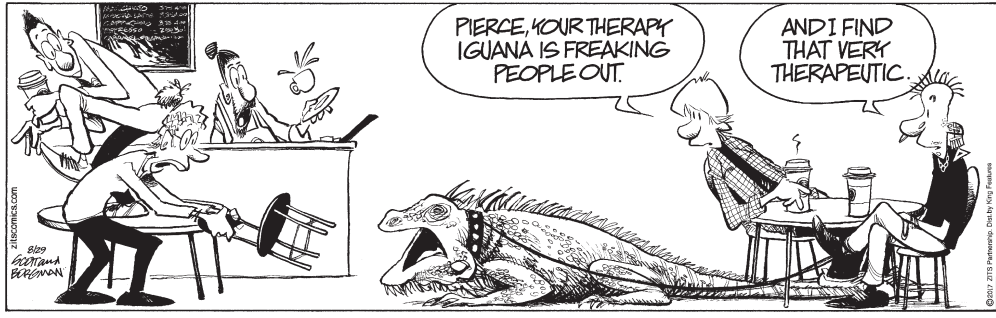
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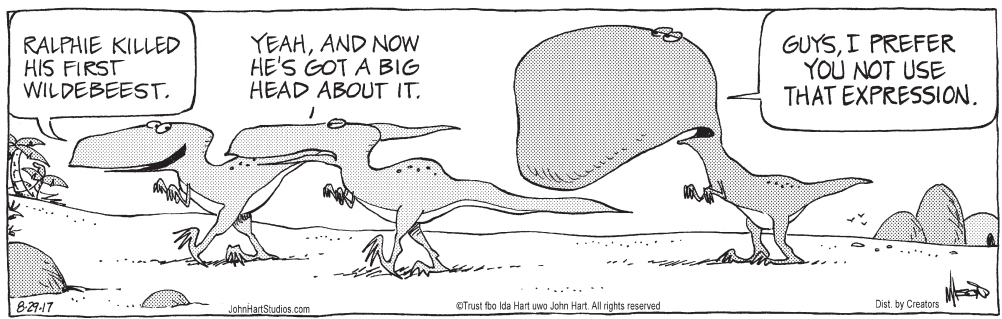
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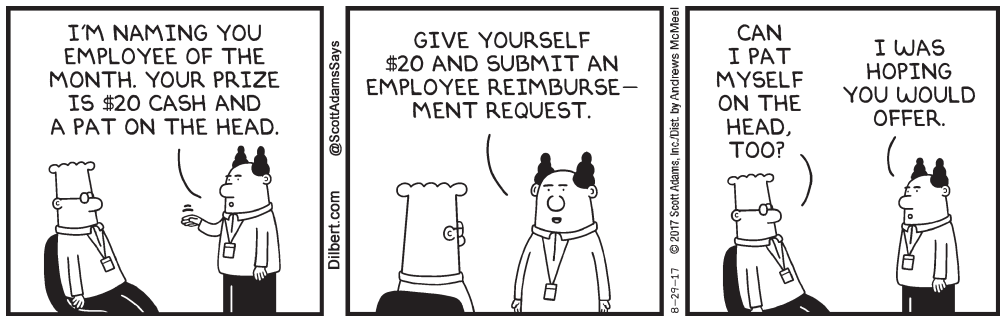
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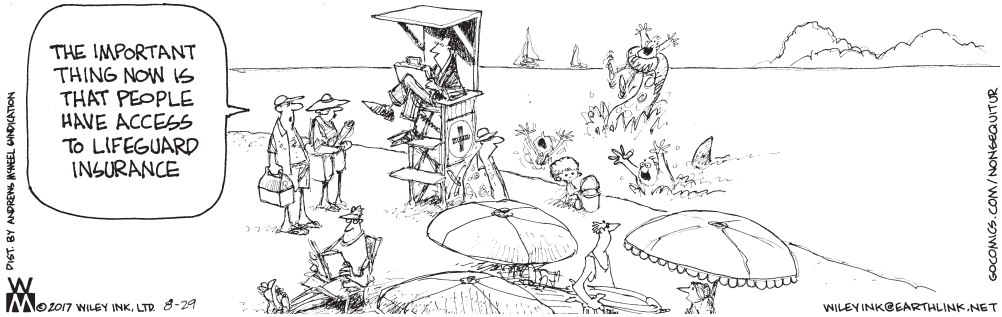
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